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ABSTRACT

This teaching guide is for use with two novels of young adult literature, "A Far-Off Land" (Rebecca Caudill) and "The Trail on Which They Wept" (Dorothy Hoobler). The teaching guide is divided into three sections: Major Themes (8 themes are listed); Interdisciplinary Topics (9 topics are suggested); and Significant Quotations for Writing Prompts and Discussion (14 questions are presented for each novel). (NKA)

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by Mary Warner

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A Teaching Guide for *A Far-Off Land* by Rebecca Caudill and *The Trail on Which They Wept* by Dorothy Hoobler

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See also Mary Warner's article on these novels.

I. Major Themes

A. Treatment of Native Americans

B. Attitude toward the Land and Material Possessions

C. Wisdom Figures

D. Displacement/Loss of Home

E. The Quest

F. Value of Family/Children/Community

G. Desire for Freedom/Autonomy

H. Experiencing Death and Loss

II. Interdisciplinary Topics

A. "Relocation" of Cherokee compared with the Internment of Jews and Japanese in World War II

1. Parallel with Elie Wiesel's *Night* on Jews being forced into ghettos and eventually concentration camps
2. Parallel with Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston's *Farewell to Manzanar* on Japanese forced into Internment Camps

B. Revolutionary War Study

1. Francis Marion
2. George Rogers Clark
3. Roles of the Appalachian colonists

C. The Moravians

1. Philosophy
2. History

D. Sequoyah and Other Native American Leaders

E. Cherokee Beliefs

1. Naming
2. Burial customs

F. Retaining Cherokee Language and Culture

1. Cherokee words in the text
2. "The Raven Mockers"
3. "The Darkening Land"

G. Establishing Appalachian Culture and Tradition

H. The Historical Background of The Trail of Tears

1. Role of the state of Georgia
2. Role of Andrew Jackson
3. Role of Martin Van Buren

I. Role of the Elders/Influence of Wisdom Figures

1. Grandmother and medicine belt
2. Sequoyah
3. Sister Oesterlein in the Moravian community

III. Significant Quotations for Writing Prompts and Discussion

A. From ***The Trail on Which They Wept*** by **Dorothy Hoobler (with Thomas Hoobler)**:

1. "He [Sequoyah] is a wanderer. But he knows where his home is" (8).

2. "They [some Cherokee who had taken money for land] will spend the money, and soon it will be gone. But land cannot be spent or sold. It is the gift of the Great Spirit" (15).

3. Cherokee Chief John Ross, in conversation with President Martin Van Buren, is offered five million dollars for the Cherokee land. Ross says, "I asked what price he would take for the graves of his parents and house where he was born?" (18).

4. "The soldiers are already here. They have guns, and we do not. They are many, and we are few. Let me tell you what they have already done to clear one of our towns. They rounded up all the children and put them into camps. Their parents had to follow, or they would never see their children again" (18-19).

5."Our children are our future...We cannot risk their lives. We cannot keep the Americans from taking our land..." (19).

6. "Each family could take only what they could carry. Sarah's family was lucky--they had enough horses to pull two wagons. But even so, they would have to leave a lot behind" (20).

7. Father takes the Cherokee newspaper: "He had saved all the copies of the Cherokee newspaper that was printed in the letters that Sequoyah had invented. 'This must never be lost,' he told Tsaluh. 'Someday you will teach your own children to read'" (26).

8. "The soldiers forced everyone into the stockades--mothers with newborn babies, sick people, old men and women who could barely walk. No one was allowed to stay behind" (29).

9. "Families began to discard some of their belongings to make the load lighter. Tsaluh's mother threw away the sewing table that had been a wedding present. Then Father's favorite chair. Finally the mattresses went too. The road behind was strewn with all the things that reminded them of their old home" (34).

10. [at the burial of a young mother and her infant] "There was no time for a proper ceremony, just a few words and a prayer. The living had to move on. The man left behind his loved ones with only a hastily carved piece of wood to mark their resting place" (36).

11. Grandmother, Tsaluh's wisdom figure, refuses to go the whole journey--"You will take my spirit with you. But I will never go where the sun dies" (38).

12. "The government, as it had promised, gave them land, horses, cows, and food. But nothing that the Cherokees received was as good as what they had left behind. The land set aside as 'Indian territory' was empty because no one wanted it. The cattle they were given were so thin they could hardly stand. The food was so poor that it only made more people sick" (44).

13. "The Cherokee did not punish their children. They expected them to learn by watching what the adults did. If a child did something wrong, she would have to find it out for herself (46).

14. Tsaluh asking why her grandmother had to die: "That is an easy question. Because everyone has to die. But you know that those who die on Earth go to live among the stars. We think that they are happier there" (48).

B. Writing Prompts Quotes from ***The Far-Off Land*** by **Rebecca Caudill**:

1. "'As you go into the far-off land, Ketty, every person crossing your path will call to you. He may not call so you can hear. But he will call just the same because he needs somebody to listen to him--to understand him, to speak to him in a friendly voice, to care about him, maybe to laugh with him. So, when people cross your path, and when voices speak, whether or not you hear the voices, be present'" (35, advice of Sister Oesterlein).

2. "'The second rule is, be reverent. Reverence God and all that He has created. Especially reverence life, Ketty--all life. Reverence and enjoy the lovely things of earth--wind in wheat fields, cucumber vines in bloom, the smell of scythed hay in windrows, the noise of thunder, and the stillness of the snow. Whatever falls to your lot, lean times or times of plenty, if you care about people and walk reverently, Ketty, you will be doing right. And you can make any far-off land a good land'" (35-6, Sister O.'s advice continued).

3. Ketty's description on her niece Lennie as a poet prompts this definition: "A poet is somebody who can see things ordinary mortals can't see" (45).

4. "People are always trying to find some far-off land--leaving behind the fields they've tended and

the friends they love and crossing ocean seas and climbing high mountains to get to it. How are we to know when we get to the French Lick if it's the far-off land we're looking for?" (53)

5. Ketty and Anson in discussion about the Indians: "'All of Salem met up with Indians many time,' Ketty said. 'Whenever Indians came to Salem they were treated like human beings. If they were hungry, they were given a warm place to sleep in the hayloft, since that was more to their liking than a proper bed. And the next day they went on their way'" (57).

6. "'You've left Salem behind, Ketty,' Anson told her. 'Out here in the wilderness folks live by a different law. It's a fight to the finish 'twixt the red men and the white, and nobody's a-thinking he can make Indians over by teaching little red rapscallions their ABCs'"
"'But wouldn't it be better if we lived in peace with the Indians?' Ketty asked."
"'Sure,' said Anson. 'Ever'body wants to live in peace. But out here in the wilderness, ain't but one way to live in peace'" (58).

7. "But her mind was a ferment of questions. Why should she be afraid of red men in the wilderness when she had not been afraid of them in Salem? How did anybody, gripped in the ice of fear, break out of it? Where was this strange voyage among strange people taking her?" (78)

8. "What else is waitin' but not knowin'?" (103, Tish's words)

9. George and Ketty are in conversation and there are many significant quotes here; the following is a segment of George's words in attempting to explain why the Indians are hostile, why the whites feel free to kill and take the lands, and why the tension exists. "Because they're land-greedy...They're always pushing west, and always in the same way. First one ventures out, a hunter or a trapper. Then other hunters come. They like the lay of the land, so they decide to fetch their families and settle. They cut done trees that shelter the wild game, and plant corn. Their neighbors follow and take up claims of their own. And nobody says by-your-leave to the red men..." (141-47)

10. "Through the nightmare of her own fear, Ketty discovered Farrer's small hand resting in confidence in the palm of her hand. To her, suddenly, it seemed the hand of all men, time out of mind, who, forever lured toward some far-off land, had hungered and thirsted and been afraid, had asked questions and got only stillness for answers, had loved and waited and died in lonesome places, clutching in the fog and the willful wind and the rain for a hand to steady them" (169).

11. George shares that thoughts are not enough to change the course of red men's/white men's relationships: "Deeds. Deeds born of loving thought and acted out in love...This bloody river of hate that has its headwaters in both red men and white men--even one loving deed might change the directions of its channel a little. But who is strong enough and good enough to do the deed?" (183)

12. After leaving a group of people, the Shanors, who are beset by the Indians, words of Ketty and George: "Everybody—sometime or other—comes to helplessness..."
"You're right, Ketty,...all men everywhere, sometime or other, come to helplessness. No man is ever so strong but at some time he stands in need of pity--love and pity" (213).

13. Tish to Lettice, who has just had her baby drown and now Lettice says she wants to die: "Life ain't a purty to throw away when you get tired of hit. Even when life's a burden, you don't throw hit away. You hold on to hit, hard" (214).

14. "But the wilderness kept a stern school. In it a body learned quick enough what comes first and

what waits" (279).

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Top of Page

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